

TWO MORE FOR SUPER BASHER

WE CAME UP WITH TWO MORE WINNERS YESTERDAY SO FOR TODAY'S BEST THREE BETS JUST DIAL: 0905 235 2821

Calls cost £1 per min at all times from BT landline

WINNERS!

FREE TIPS TODAY

Text TIPS to 88600

HUGE WINNERS from our panel of experts

T: 016 3rd Floor, 4-6 Newgate St, EC1V 7AD. Text 0800 105 105. Web www.Text4tips.co.uk. Avg. 3m/day. All rights reserved.

THE SAFE BET

1.2 BETS EACH MESSAGE

W 10/1 W 9/1 W 8/1 W 7/1

GREAT FRI RESULTS INC

8 WINNERS IN A ROW!

TOP INFO TODAY

TOP SAYS SAYS IT'S

A DEAD CERT'

NAMED IN UNDER 60 SECS

0906 635 8857

Cost £1.60 per min from a BT landline

OPERA TELECOM, BIRMINGHAM B1 2JB

DALE MCKEOWN

EX CHAMPION JOCKEY

MARKS YOUR CARD

W 8/1 W 6/1 W 10/3 W 4/1

W 3/1 W 11/2 ETC

GREAT RECENT FORM

MAKE SURE YOU DON'T

MISS OUT TODAY!!!

TOP CLASS NEWS!

MASSIVE WAGER

CONTACT SAYS

"THE STABLE WONT

HEAR OF THIS HORSE

BEING BEATEN"

GET ON NOW!

0906 635 8858

Calls cost £1.60 per minute

OPERA TELECOM BIRMINGHAM B1 2JB

TOP TIPS ONLINE

RACE TIPS FROM OUR NO 1 TIPSTER

3 WINNING BETS FROM 4 LAST FRIDAY

GALLERY GOD W 7/2

DAWARDARI W 6/4 ETC

VERY STRONG BET FOR TODAY

"A RACING CERT"

SAYS TOP CONTACT

0906 635 8859

CALLS COST £1.50 PER MINUTE

OPERA TELECOM BIRMINGHAM B1 2JB

RACING SPY

THE ONE OF THE RACING WORLD

RACING'S VERY OWN SECRET AGENT

FRM SAME SOURCE AS

MAMBO BOY

A HUGE 25-1 COUP

CH'HAM PROFESSIONAL

JOB HORSE TODAY

SPY'S MAN IS CONFIDENT

"it's money in the bank!"

0906 635 9982

CALLS COST £1.50 PER MINUTE FROM A BT LAND LINE

OPERA TELECOM, BIRMINGHAM B1 2JB

"STABLE SPY"

"Inside's Tip sent live to your mobile Now!"

Lori Saturday: "BREAKING SHADOW" - Won 16/1

"For Today's Big 16/1+ SET-UP"

10p "Txt:"

msg sent All Networks

"SPY for 87070 NOW!"

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CHELTENHAM (CH4) COMMENTARY ON 09055 141 601 (611)

TRACKFACTS The new left-hand oval course has ten stiff fences with seven hurdles per circuit. On the new track the last half-mile is all uphill with a run-in of 237yds.

TOP TRAINERS (with runners) M Pipe 55 (13%, 13% strike rate), -£25.34, P Nicholls 35, (18%), +£14.87, P Hobbs 23, (13%), -£41.29, Jonjo O'Neill, (13%), +£28.57, N Henderson 18, (13%), -£29.85, Miss H Knight 12, (11%), -£44.08, Miss V Williams 11, (10%), -£40.92.

TOP JOCKEYS (with mounts) A McCoy 57 winners, (22% strike rate), -£22.00, R Walsh 24, (18%), +£17.66, M Fitzgerald 22, (15%), -£39.85, T J Murphy 13, (9%), +£21.12.

CH4 1.10 AMATEUR RIDERS' HANDICAP CH (E) (19 fences) 3m/f (12 runners) £12,731

1	P2151-	HISTORIC (214)(D2,G,S)	T George 8 11 11...Mr Gordon Elliott 87
2	0/P22-	RATHBWN PRINCE (252)(G,S)	Miss H Knight 12 11 11Mr J Jarrett (7)75
3	3/PFO-U	BOUNCE BACK (6)(G,S)	M Pipe 8 11 10...Mr A Glassonbury (7) 97
4	1/PF-21	UN JOUR A VASSY (17)(CD2,D3,FG,S)	T J Murphy 11 11 11...Mr T J Murphy 13, (9%), +£21.12.
5	24/2-5	WILLIE JOHN DALY (24)(D2,G,S)	P Nicholls 9 11 9...Miss V Williams, 8 ran.
6	11/1004	TOM'S PRIZE (13)(D4,G,S)	J Searing 9 11 7Mr T J Draper (5) 65
7	32/4366	SMILE PLEEEZ (17)(D7,F,G,S)	M Sheppard 12 10 11Mr L Stephens (5) 106
8	54/213P	FARINEL (5)(D3,G,S)	A L Moore (RE) 8 10 11...Mr P Roche (5) 108
9	0/14000	STARFORM: HISTORIC D: Willie John Daly	Jamie Poulton 9 10 5...Mr J Morgan (5) 109
10	P-1261	LUNKIE MICK (17)(F,G,S)	C L Tizzard 9 10 2...Mr D Jacob (7)*120
11	2/P23-0	BLAZING HILLS (34)(D4,F,G)	P Dalton 8 10 0...Mr P Callaghan (5) 107
12	0/5000	HAPPY HUSARRY (17)(F,G,S)	Dr Pritchard 11 10 11Dr P Pritchard —

Star Betting: — 3 Un Jour A Vassy, 7-2 Willie John Daly, 7-Tom's Prize, 8 Smile Pleeze, 12 Blazing Hills, 13 Farniel, 14 others. 2003: Itsybony, 10-10, 13, (P) S Thomas (5), 11-2 Miss V Williams, 8 ran.

HISTORIC is a sound jumper who can make it three wins from six starts over fences. Not surprisingly outclassed on his last visit here when 5th in the SunAlliance Chase, he signed off with a 9% strike rate, 10th in the Cheltenham (2002). Come E nov chivalley. Willie John Daly is proving a better jumper of fences than hurdles getting off the mark in the second attempt with a 13% victory.

STARFORM: HISTORIC D: Willie John Daly

CH4 1.45 SHARP NOVICES' HURDLE Gd2 (8 flights) 2m/f (9 run) £20,300

1	011522	DAWTON (16)(D2,F,G)	T George 6 11 7...J M Maguire 86
2	311111	MARCEL (20)(D2,F,G,S)	T J Murphy 10 11...R Thornton 86
3	22-111	NYRCHE (13)(D3,G,S)	A King 4 11 7...R Thornton 86
4	30-11	SHUHOD (22)(D2,G,S)	P R Webber 4 11 4...T Doyle*109
5	1/P-1	THE RISING MOON (19)(D2,S)	Jonjo O'Neill 5 11 4...A P McCoy 91
6	3125-2	BABY RUN (34)(D,B,F,G)	N Twiston-Davies 4 11 0.C Llewellyn, 90
7	235532	ILOVERTLE (95)	M Chapman 4 11 0...A C Coyle 82
8	52-11F	MISTER FLINT (20)(B,F,D,G)	P Hobbs 6 11 10...M A Fitzgerald 106
9	1/12-5	RAVEN'S LAST (14)(B,F,D,S)	R Phillips 5 11 0...W Marston, 7 ran.

4 Marcel, 9-2 Baby Run, 5 Mister Flint, Nyrche, 10 Shuhod, 28 Double, 30 Baby Run, 31 Baby Run, 32 Baby Run, 33 Baby Run, 2003: Set Deaf, 6-11-0, (F) Kintyre, 2-1) Miss E Lavelle, 7 ran.

MARCEL, formerly trained in France is unbeaten in five starts here most recently eased down to give Twiddel Turn (rec 2lb) by 21 (Kempton 2nd nov hdle/soft). His task was simplified when fell, low and loose. He is a good jumper (now 3lb off best) overjumped and fell at the second but it will take something useful to lower his colours. Mister Flint left last season's form behind when returning in September for two flat victories at Windsor and

Exeter but a bigger threat could be Nyrche who has won three of his four starts over timber most recently quickening clear on the board to give Stan 8lb and a 4lb drop (rec 2lb) over soft/hard. A fair, useful bumper. Baby Run was a bit awkward at his debut on his hurdling bow when beaten 1-3 by the selection's stablemate Escompteur at levels (Bango 2m/f 11/6g) now.

STARFORM: MARCEL Danger: Nyrche

CH4 2.55 BEARDS JEWELLERS CUP HANDICAP CHASE (B) (12 fences) 3m/f (11 run) £17,400

1	4441-1	CENKOS (188)(CD11,F,G,S)	P Nicholls 10 11 12...R Walsh 133
2	2624-1	ARMATURK (13)(D,B,F,G,S)	P Nicholls 7 11 14Christian Williams 145
3	1511-1	WELL CHIEF (23)(CD4,F,G,S)	M Pipe 5 11 3...T J Murphy 117
4	20156-	UPGRADE (202)(C2,D4,F,G)	A P McCoy 118
5	U31F-1	DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM (3)(B,D,F,G)	Mister G Mcdgoldrick (13)(D6,E,S)

Mr S J Smith 11 0...D Elsworth 140

P R Webber 8 10 0...T Doyle 144

SIR STORM (30)(D6,G,S,P)

50110-1 G M Moore 8 10 0...A Ross*149

15-304 C Mann 6 10 0...N Fehily 123

05-02 P Nolan 10 0...A P Crowe 137

11, Sir Storm 9-1, Emporers Guest, 10, Tinkler, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 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LARK LOOKS ON SONG

NINJA LARK (10.08) and Knockeevan Magic, two of Romford's best-loved stars in recent years, are back on the track following enforced spells of inactivity and they go head-to-head in the top division of the 400m contest at the Essex track tonight.

Not surprisingly, both suffered defeats on their respective comebacks with Ninja Lark suffering a bumpy ride after turning sharp left from the three-box over C&D a fortnight ago, while last weekend Knockeevan Magic was no match for track specialist Oklahoma Gold in a Sittingbourne sprint, although he showed none of his old sparkle and awesome speed was lost.

Both sets of supporters will be high in confidence, but Ninja Lark would appear to have both a draw and fitness edge over Peter Rich's former

HENLOW TIPS

7.35 ORIENTAL STAKE (4)	Silk Trade (5)
7.51 FURIOUS PRINCE (5)	Moyer Heather (1)
8.07 SAFFRON LEONA (1)	Ballard Jackdaw (6)
8.23 IM ADVENTUROUS (nb) (6)	Tain Emer (5)
8.39 FUDGELTOWN PET (2)	Edgar (3)
8.55 PLOUGHMAN BERT (5)	Attkitt Flame (4)
9.11 JUMPING GIRL (2)	Allglaze Raver (1)
9.27 GLENNDAVY (5)	Miss Colleen (6)
9.43 BRUNO (6)	Fairfield Ruth (4)
9.59 ANCHOR BAY PIPER (nap) (1)	Midway Larking (4)
10.15 MILL STREET (3)	Zena (5)

YOUR AFTERNOON BAGS CARDS WITH BEST HINTS

WIMBLEDON

11.26 (A5)	460m
1 5163 Jump For Joy (sa fw)	28.68
2 5241 Kilkick Croaker (sa fw)	28.68
3 3165 Do You Turn (sa fw)	28.28
4 4523 We Got Him (sa fw)	28.68
5 5113 Rascal Chaser (ep wd)	28.55
6 3161 I'm A Winner (ep wd)	28.55
7 5254 Star betting: 3 Buckshot 3, T	28.55
8 5121 Ninja Lark (ep wd)	28.55
9 5123 Knockeevan Magic (ep wd)	28.55
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Brian banking on Danny boy

■ by MIKE PLATT

least one change, with Iestyn Harris ruled out through illness.

The Bradford stand-off, who was on the bench at Huddersfield, has failed to recover from the flu virus which has swept through the camp and Noble admits there are concerns over some other members of the 19-man squad.

Spirit

Bradford prop Stuart Fielden, man of the match in Britain's first Tri-Nations outing, resumed training yesterday after being sent home at the start of the week.

"He practised well today and seems to be in good spirits," said Noble.

"There is a good spirit in the camp. The focus is on winning the Test match.

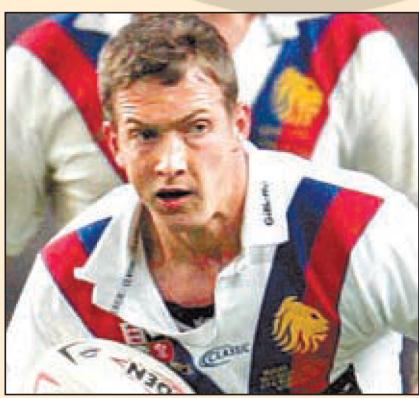
"Everybody who has been able to practice has practised well and we're delighted with them."

One man fit and raring to go is skipper Andy Farrell, who was one of the players badly affected by illness during the win over the Kiwis.

Debuts

"Today is the first day I've felt 100%," he said. Noble has including two uncapped players – St Helens hooker Mick Higham and Wigan loose forward Sean O'Loughlin – in his 19-man squad.

Both will be hoping to make their Test debuts, while three-quarter Chev Walker, who can also play second row, earns a recall after being dropped for last week's match.



MAC THE KNIFE: GB stand-off Danny McGuire

INSIDE RUGBY LEAGUE with Peter Wilson

All fired up

GREAT Britain will be hoping that their normal Senior service will be resumed at Wigan tomorrow.

And nobody is more aware that the fans are expecting much more than the man himself.

Leeds' powerful centre Keith Senior admits that "things have been a bit quiet" and he's still not firing on all cylinders.

Lethal

But the 16 stone 6ft 3in Rhino who tore great holes in both New Zealand and Australia in recent Test series – earning himself a place in an elite World X111 – senses that he's not far away from hitting the high spots again.

"I just need to start getting some of the ball I'd like and things will spring from

there," he says. Although the tries and breaks may have dried up for Senior ahead of his 18th Test appearance he is still regarded as one of the Lions' lethal weapons.

At 28, he is one of the few in the team who can remember the last victory over the Aussies seven games ago and is convinced that the trend of late defeats is about to end.

"A victory over Australia to take us into the Tri-Nations Final would be just the confidence boost we need and there's no reason why we can't do that."

A sell-out crowd, a score or two to settle and Senior back to his best ... and things could not look brighter for Britain's chances.

● THE successful Gillette Tri-Nations series – total crowd for first four games 95,000 – will be staying in Britain.

It's all to do with TV deals and the Australian reluctance to watch rugby out of season (nobody told them that when they staged the RU World Cup last year).

So British fans can now enjoy a season lasting from the beginning of February to the end of November – plus a few "off-season" games in December and January.

Is that too much of a good thing?

Spirit of '54 boost

THE World Cup is 50 years old tomorrow when Britain beat France 16-12 in Paris and a full-house at Wigan will get the chance to salute some of the first winners.

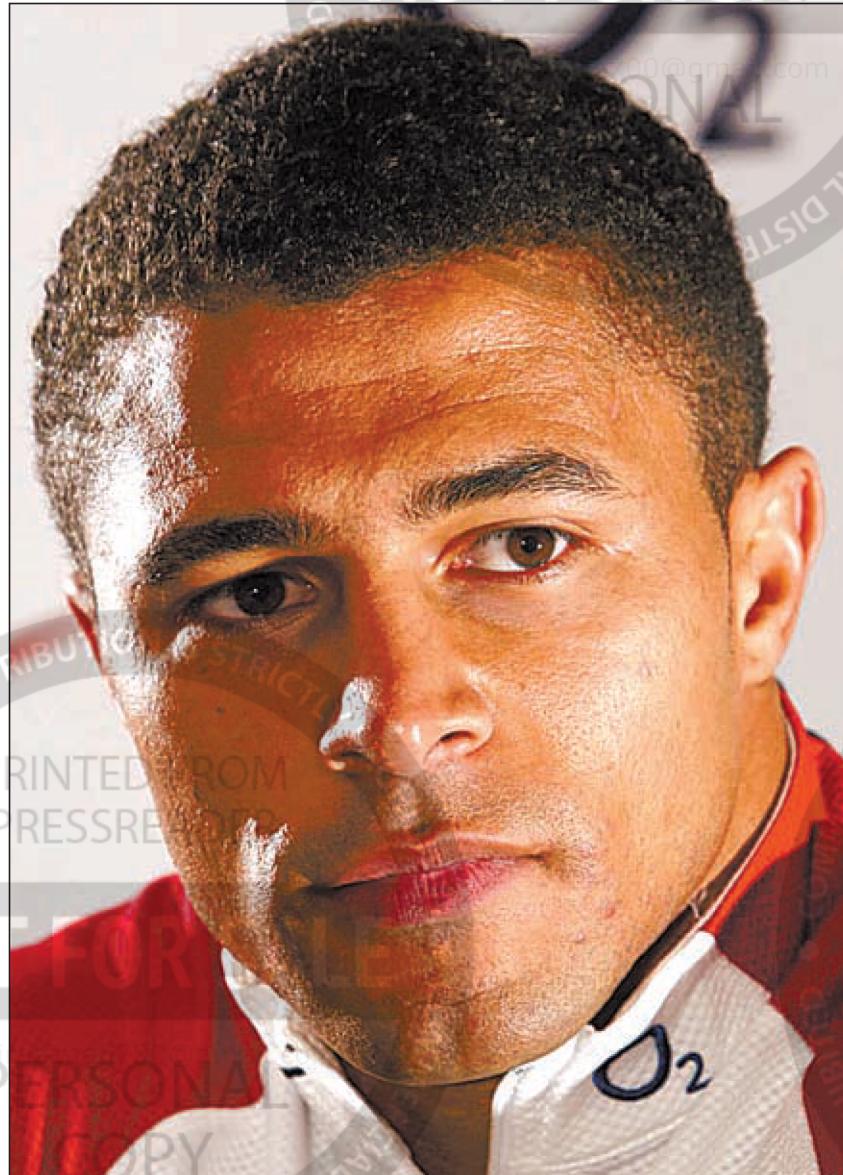
The trophy was lost for years and eventually found on a Yorkshire building site and restored before being won in 2000 by Australia (who else?).

But when such as Jimmy Ledgard, Johnny Whiteley, Mick Sullivan and their friends from that 50s triumph parade before the fans tomorrow it will be a timely reminder of what Britain have achieved in the past.

Andy Farrell and Co will need no bigger boost than that to see off the Australians.

Jason Robinson explains what

I KNOW



MAN OF FEW WORDS: But Jason Robinson's actions will always speak for themselves

Moody ends his blues



YEAR OUT: Lewis Moody

LEWIS Moody will end the most frustrating year of his career when he lines up for England tomorrow.

He returns to international action for the first time since the World Cup final almost 12 months ago, spearheading a back-row including Andy Hazel and Martin Corry.

And is just happy to be back playing after spending almost 10 months on the sidelines following a potentially career-ending foot injury he first noticed while climbing up the step of the World Cup plane bound for Australia last autumn.

"It's just a genuine happiness and excitement to be back playing," said

Moody, who had surgery after the World Cup.

"I coped very, very poorly. I've always been a very active person and to be told you've got to be completely non-weight bearing on your foot for 16 weeks was tough.

"There were down periods, but you realise why you're doing the rehab and the goal at the end of the road is really worth it."

The prize for the 26-year-old, who made his international debut against Canada in 2001, is a chance to make the England open-side flanker spot vacated by Leicester colleague Neil Back, his very own.

the job means to him and how he'll do it

THAT BEING CAPTAIN OF ENGLAND IS GOOD FOR ME

WORLD BEATER:
Robinson dives in for his try in the World Cup Final last November



ENGLAND think Jason Robinson has got the captain's X Factor.

They don't know what it is but they love it. Robinson doesn't know what it is either but he loves it too.

It's something great captains are born with, something that takes an individual on to a different level.

Martin Johnson's got it, so too Lawrence Dallaglio. The late Bobby Moore, Bryan Robson, certainly Roy Keane at Manchester United all had that secret formula that turned them into a special leader.

Has David Beckham got the X Factor? Not sure about that. So who inspired Robinson from other sports when he was growing up, who does he look at now with respect?

"No one really," he says. "I have never been one to follow sport that seriously. Never really taken notice."

Black

"I know who I learned from in rugby, men like Andy Farrell, Dean Bell, Jonno and Lawrence Dallaglio but from other sports? No-one."

Not the answer I expected although it just emphasised what an extraordinary character he is.

At Twickenham tomorrow Robinson completes a remarkable full circle when he becomes the first black man and the first former rugby league player to captain England at Union.

It's one of the fairytale stories of this sporting year and Robinson didn't appear fazed by the prospect. Why should he?

From a violent childhood, a drink problem that almost drove him to suicide, Robinson has met and beaten bigger challenges. A Born Again Christian, he had to ask

WOOLY'S B-I-G INTERVIEW

The Lord and his wife, Amanda, if it was right to captain his country.

They both said "yes" and, after waiting 24 hours to answer new England coach Andy Robinson, he said it would be an honour.

Coach Robinson says: "Since being told, Jason has responded and has got tremendous standing in the team. He doesn't use lots of words but when he does everyone listens. He's mentally strong."

Assistant coach Phil Larder adds: "Certain players, certain men are unique in that there is something inside that makes them different."

"What shall we call it, the X Factor? Johnson had it and when he sat in the dressing room you could see other players looking

at him and thinking 'I'm glad he's on our side'. The same applies to Robinson.

"They are inspirational characters who lead by example. They are role models and every youngster in the country should look at Robinson and say to himself 'I can do this.'

Black

Robinson, 30, is aware of his responsibilities and says: "The greatest quality a captain can have is the respect of his team-mates."

"A lot of people say the right words but they are no good if you can't back them up."

Robinson is aware of the pressure and knows his life is about to change, even if he is only a stop-gap captain while Jonny Wilkinson gets himself fit.

He added: "It is not a case of not liking all the stuff that goes on around David Beckham, yet anyone in life that has a high position must take responsibility."

"The media, public, everyone is looking at you differently. I spoke to my wife because this new thing in my life puts me under pressure, more of my time is taken away and to have her 100 per cent backing was important."

She has helped with enough stuff that has happened to me and she has always given me good advice. She said 'yes' and so did The Lord. I know that being captain of England is good for me.

"I have been blessed and at the start of this season I didn't believe anything else could happen to me."

"Then Sale asked me to be captain and now England."

"As a captain I will not be a crockery thrower although I will not be afraid to kick backsides if I have to. I will also lean on other experienced players."

as I have with Sale, and make decisions with them. "I am not the best captain since sliced bread and am learning as I go along."

He's one of those rare sportsmen who, when they get the ball, bring an instant reaction of expectancy. Like Bobby Charlton, Wayne Rooney or Wilkinson.

Feeling

Twickenham gets to its feet when Robinson comes into play. "I hear them and it excites me," he says. "It's a wonderful feeling."

The England team that runs out against Canada tomorrow will have only four survivors from the World Cup winning side — Robinson, Josh Lewsey, Mike Tindall and Steve Thompson. Others are injured, lost form or retired from internationals.

Robinson's career you feel is just starting. The fullback, with 19 tries in 33 Tests, is ready to open up another chapter.

BRIAN WOOLNOUGH

Kelly near end of road

DOUBLE Olympic champion Kelly Holmes is thinking of retiring after admitting her amazing success in Athens has made her lose some of her hunger.

Holmes, 34, who won the 800m and 1500m, was speaking from her training camp in South Africa.

She said: "I haven't made any plans at all. I hope to do a couple of races if everything goes smoothly."

"But I haven't made any immediate plans that would include the European Indoors (in Madrid in March). That

would depend on if I feel I'm in shape."

"I don't think I will ever have the same focus or hunger. I'm not going to run just for the sake of it."

"I've put everything emotionally and physically into what I've achieved."

"I never expected what happened in Athens. I still don't have any plans to retire but I do have to be realistic about the future."

Ronnie's happy to rocket on

■ by JAMES DOBSON

RONNIE O'Sullivan was far happier with life last night after storming into the quarter-finals of the British Open in Brighton.

O'Sullivan, who had questioned his snooker future as he scraped past John Parrott in the previous round, fired in two century breaks to defeat Stephen Lee 5-0.

The world champion extended his run of victories in ranking events to 13 matches with any thoughts of retirement apparently long forgotten.

"There's no point quoting me because what I say from one day to the next will be different," the unpredictable O'Sullivan admitted.

Flying

"It's important to play well and put in good performances for your whole well being. I didn't enjoy my match with John — but I enjoyed the one today."

"The standard is so high that you have to push yourself. It's not hard to motivate yourself these days because you know you have to." O'Sullivan, whose only British Open title success came 10 years ago, opened the match with a break of 127 and ended it with one of 100 to extend his record against Lee to nine victories in 11 meetings.

"The century Ronnie had in the first frame settled him down," said Lee. "When I did get a chance I just felt cold."

As O'Sullivan coasted through, world number two Mark Williams was heading back to Wales after suffering a 5-3 defeat against Nottingham's Anthony Hamilton.

Williams, who has now lost his last four meetings with Hamilton, was looking to lift his first major title since capturing the LG Cup 13 months ago.

But Hamilton played some of his best snooker for some time, knocking in breaks of 53, 82, 71, 69, 90 and 84 to complete another victory over the two-time world champion.

"I always seem to play well against Mark," he said.

"He played better than he has for a while, but I was flying."

Ding Jun Hui, the 17-year-old prodigy from Shanghai who beat Jimmy White in the previous round, failed to reach the last eight.

He was beaten 5-2 by Glasgow's Stephen Maguire.

Ding's progress has attracted huge media interest in China — but after edging 2-1 ahead, he found Maguire too hot to handle.

Barnes is a Ray of light

■ by KEVIN FRANCIS

BRITISH welterweight champion David Barnes has been likened to a "young Sugar Ray Leonard" by boxing legend Barry McGuigan.

Barnes defends his title against James Hare at the Northbridge Leisure Centre in Halifax tonight and former WBC world featherweight legend McGuigan can't speak highly enough of him.

Flashy

McGuigan, a Sky TV pundit tonight, said: "Watching him at times reminds me of a young Sugar Ray Leonard by boxing legend Barry McGuigan."

Barnes has the fast hands and fast foot movement, flashy style and accuracy."

Leonard was a champion at five different weights and McGuigan said: "Barnes doesn't have Leonard's punching potency nor his overall class, but there are resemblances and he is a kid that's constantly improving."

McGuigan said of challenger Hare: "He will be difficult to beat with his counter-punching style."

SERIOUSLY
football

FA CUP COUNTDOWN: No stopping veteran Taylor

BOB CAN
STILL DO
A JOB

BOB TAYLOR strolls out in the FA Cup for the 22nd time tomorrow and admits he still gets the same buzz as he did the very first time.

Taylor goes into Tamworth's first-round tie at Blackpool on the back of a sensational hat-trick.

And while he might be 38 in a couple of months' time, his treble against Leigh RMI should be enough to guarantee the former West Brom and Bolton favourite a start against the League One side.

Heroics

The cup has lost none of its appeal for Taylor, who went as far as the semi-finals with Bolton.

And his heroics last week, as he helped turn around a 2-0 deficit against Leigh, means he goes into today's game a marked man.

But Taylor revealed: "You still get the same buzz, probably even more so now, because you know your career is coming to an end."

"When I was a kid at school, I

■ by DAVE ARMITAGE

used to write essays saying I wanted to be a professional footballer.

"You don't lose that but I've been lucky enough to live that whole thing out and I wouldn't change it for the world."

"You never lose the enthusiasm for it all."

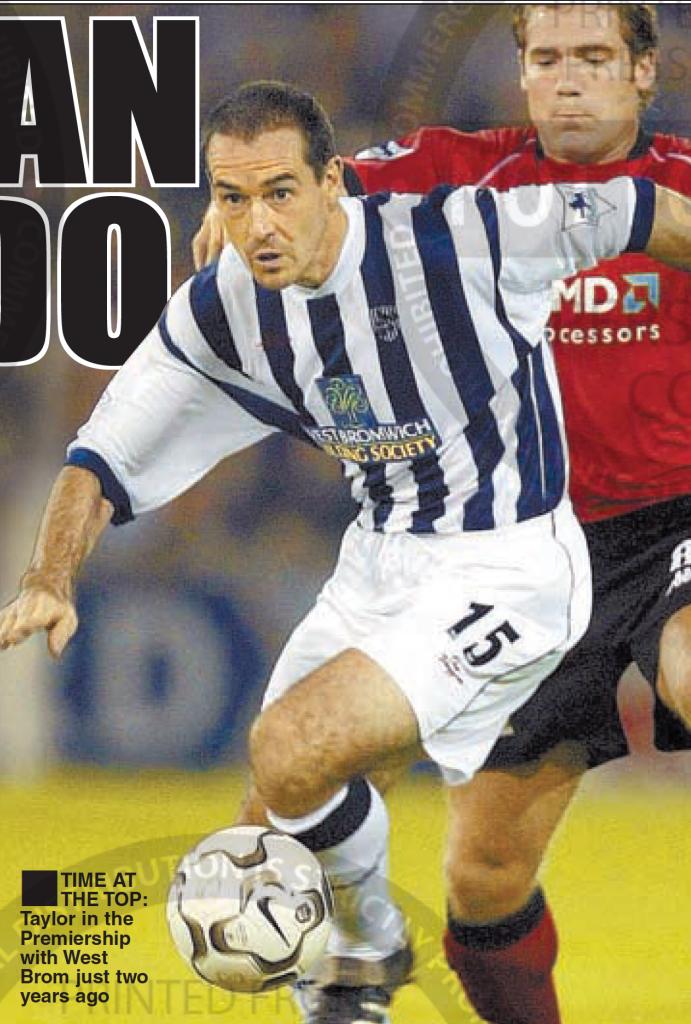
"When I got my third goal last week I was like a big kid, running around all over the place – the lads couldn't catch me!"

"Sure, I get a lot of mickey-taking but there's nothing they can throw at me about my age I haven't heard a million times before."

"That's what comes with experience."

"But when it comes to kick-off time I'll be just as excited as the younger lads. That never goes away – mind you that hinges on my being selected."

"I always say 'if selected' because you won't find me getting changed before the team has been announced. You never know, do you?"



TIME AT
THE TOP:
Taylor in the
Premiership
with West
Brom just two
years ago

GAZ'S UP-HILL BATTLE



OLD SCORE: Garry Hill

HORNCHURCH boss Garry Hill has got an old score to settle with his Boston counterpart Steve Evans.

But as the Urchins sensationally went bust last week, Hill has got no experienced players to help him out.

Three years ago, Hill was in charge of Dagenham and Redbridge as they finished level on points with Boston at the top of the Conference.

Boston had the better goal difference and were allowed to go into the Football League – despite being found guilty of breaking the rules over player contracts.

Evans was suspended for 20 months and fined £8,000 for his part in it.

But now he is back, Hill has moved on

■ by JACK STEGGLES

and the pair come face to face at Boston's York Street ground in an FA Cup first-round clash.

In three glorious years Hill led Dagenham to the third round twice and the fourth round once. But now he is scratching around to field a team for their biggest game of the season.

Last week's side for an FA Trophy game at Ariesey included 15-year-old Billy Drake.

And Hill admitted: "I'll be scratching around until the last minute trying to get some people in. If I don't manage that it will be down to the kids."

Charles is king for day

IT sounds like a script from Dream Team – a player steps straight from a five-a-side kickabout into a sell-out FA Cup tie.

But that is what is happening tomorrow when Charles Libam plays for Histon against Football League

strugglers Shrewsbury. Libam, 23, a former Ivory Coast international who had come to England in search of work, was playing for

fun in a local sports centre when he was spotted by Histon skipper Neil Andrews.

Now he has scored four goals in as many games for the Southern League Premier Division side and is being primed for some cup giant-killing glory against the Shrews.

5 FOR FUN

- Which Scot recently defeated Samuel Kebbede, taking the second to retain the WBO featherweight title?
- Which Formula One driver had his first Grand Prix success when he prevailed in this year's Monaco GP?
- Who was the first non-British player to win the Scottish Footballer of the Year Award?
- Arsenal's record win and loss is against the same club no longer in the Football League. What is the name of the team?
- On which English course did Sean Ballesteros win his first Open Championship?

SPORTWORD

ACROSS

- Yorkshire racecourse (5)
- Nelson Classic, famous American golf tournament (5)
- Gary, golf's Portuguese Open winner in 2000 (3)
- ...-speedway, non-motorised sport (5)
- Paul, former IBF featherweight champion born in Scarborough (5)
- Saint Martin, jockey who won the Arc de Triomphe on four occasions (4)
- See 20 across.
- Samuel Palmer, Leicestershire and West Indies fast bowler (6)
- Jausovec, French Open champion for ladies' singles in 1977 (4)
- Andy, US Open golf champion on two occasions (4)
- 20, and 11 across. Wimbledon men's singles champion in 1992 (5,6)
- Jones, Wimbledon ladies' singles champion in 1969 (3)
- Celtic, Leeds United and Scotland manager (5)
- Brazil's 1994 World Cup winning captain (5)

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Redknapp wants director's cut

HARRY LAYS DOWN LAW

STRAIGHT TALKER:
Harry Redknapp
has told Milan
Mandaric where
he stands

■ by PETER WHITE

HARRY REDKNAPP last night warned Portsmouth: "If you appoint a director of football, he won't direct me."

Manager Redknapp's fragile peace with chairman Milan Mandaric was again broken by the news Pompey's multi-millionaire owner is preparing to bring in ex-Panathinaikos chief Velimir Zajec.

Mandaric has talked to the 47-year-old about a possible future boardroom role as he looks to restructure the club before they move to their new stadium.

But "old school" boss Redknapp wasted no time in laying down a few ground rules.

He said: "I don't know anything about this, so I cannot say whether there is any truth in it.

Decision

"But if there was something in it then of course it would concern me.

"He is the chairman and can do what he wants. It would be his decision.

"But my decision would then be whether I wanted to carry on working under those circumstances and with those type of people."

Zajec spent more than 20 years with Panathinaikos and won 57 caps as a player for Yugoslavia - Mandaric's country.

But Redknapp, who was once director of football at Pompey while Graham Rix was manager, added: "The position of director of football does not work."

Ave it back, Bentley

DAVID BENTLEY is back in Norwich's side at Charlton tomorrow after being told to leave the John Smith's adverts to Peter Kay.

The on-loan Arsenal prospect has been axed for two games by boss Nigel Worthington as a punishment for mocking one of the Carrow Road chief's training routines.

Bentley ignored what he had been asked to do and instead booted the

ball as far as he could - just like comic Kay in the 'Ave It' beer ads.

But his stone-faced boss failed to find the joke funny.

Worthington said: "We've got good discipline at this club and we've got great pride in it.

"The good thing is he has listened and learned, and since this happened he has been much better and looks like the player we brought in on loan."

Rob's Toon future

LAURENT ROBERT is winning his battle to convince Graeme Souness he has a key role to play in the Newcastle manager's rebuilding plans.

Souness has pledged to strengthen the squad when the transfer window opens in January and Robert feared his face would not fit and looked to be on his way out.

But Souness has assured the mercurial Frenchman he still has a future at St James' Park and has shrugged off reports from across the Channel alleging unsettled Robert wants to quit.

The Newcastle boss said: "All he did was contact an official at Paris St Germain asking for tickets to a game for a member of his family.

"I have to believe Laurent when he tells

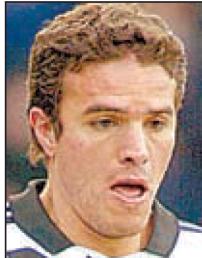
■ by IAN MURTAGH

me he is happy here." Souness is encouraged that his defensive responsibilities are at last hitting home with Robert, who has been in and out of the side since the Scot took control.

Robert was the Toon's top performer in Wednesday's League Cup defeat against Chelsea and Souness added: "Laurent is a tremendous talent and provides great ammunition for our forwards.

"But it's my job to ensure he supports the defenders as well."

Centre-half Titus Bramble is another player winning over his boss and he may start his first league game of the season against Manchester United on Sunday.



PLANS: Laurent Robert

DAILY STAR, Friday, November 12, 2004

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■ ANYONE give me a straight answer y pine can attract a striker? We offer four grand a week as they still say no. **marc.**

■ Wigley on the dole scum goin down happy days. **Ali pfc.**

■ EMLYN HUGHES WAS A LEGEND, TOP BLOKE AND PLAYER. DONT TARNISH US ALL WITH SAME BRUSH REDS FANS. big d. **mill-wall man.**

■ To mat. man utds glory days are over no matter who they bring as a coach. get rid of horse nistelrooy, keane, and giggs. **Rimi.**

■ Emlyn crazy horse hughes will always be remembered for giving football something that's lacking in today's game. **ENTHUSIASM** PLUS COMMITMENT. **Bobins.**

■ Them scouse blue tosser's make the most of ya luck cause ya won't have MOYES next season his off to manage the MUFC **S****** ha! ha! **Worcester Brickies.**

■ Could not happen 2 a better bloke wigley sacked and beaten by the pompey massive u gimp. **woz 6.57.**

■ Good luk 2 exeter in their fight 2 get bak in league, yr boys that we drank with at sheep v lions at old trafford were top lads, chester til i die. **Gaz, saltney.**

■ 2 all you everton knob eds, the premiership is over 38 games, not 12! **Carl j LFC.**

■ Oi, ste wafc, 20,000 v west ham? Over half of them were ammers and you know it! **el kel whu.**

■ Come on everton we can do it. **kenny.**

■ I must admit the young arsenal stars look promising, but if u notice there isn't many english youngsters, not like mufc, who always produce good young players from our own shores. **Mat. mufc.**

■ Get on! Argyle beat Wigan, big respect. By the way Sid n Mark who the hell are Exeter. Have they got a footy team? Ya fragles. Com on Pilgrims. **Percy.**

■ RIP "Crazy Horse" a real Kop legend. We'll never get that smile. **WALK ON, UP THERE EMLYN.** God bless ya! **CHALKIE L.E.C.**

■ Ste wafc, you only had 20,000 there cause last game of season and whufc took 9,000 fans. **Dave.**

■ PFC We'll do you at yours then relegate you at the park. **Scummers goin down! matt.**

■ To all u cockneys u youngsters are not bad but when they go to old trafford the stage fight will kick in. **ps united 4. rooney broderick.**

■ Ste wafc. Like to tell us Y U were nearly out numbered by west ham fans? **Dont brag. Ken.**

■ 2 andy u stupid scummer u aint got a hope. **pompey joe.**

■ Why does o'neill look at the ground during interviews? Is it because he is ashamed of his style of football? Football RIP! **The Flute Men.**

■ another season without a trophy for the barcodes. apart from that joke fairs cup b***x you won years ago, it's been 50 years, you muppets, boro n-east No.1. **BORO BOB.**



TALKS: Mandaric

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Karla Uncovered - 0367

Jordan

Christy

Lauren

Leanne

Fans want cash back

ANGRY Southampton fans want the club's players to give them back the £30,000 they spent watching Tuesday's League Cup collapse.

Around 2,400 went to Watford to see their Premiership stars humiliated in a 5-2 thrashing, and they believe they deserve a refund.

Even Saints midfielder Rory Delap described the performance as "a disgrace" and a players meeting has been held to sort out the problems that have battered the club ahead of tomorrow's home clash with South Coast rivals Portsmouth.

Republic of Ireland international Delap confirmed: "The players had a meeting away from the coaching staff. A lot of things were said and a lot of truths came out."

"Afterwards a couple of the senior players saw head coach Steve Wigley to pass on things that had been said. We feel it produced positive results all round."

Delap's apology on behalf of his team mates won't stop supporters insisting Wigley's floss should foot the bill for the Watford trip.

Steve Grant, spokesman for SaintsAway Supporters, said: "It would be a nice gesture from the players, but I am not hopeful. You

■ by PETER WHITE

don't get much from the club. For the players to go out and play like that was scandalous."

Mick O'Callaghan, chairman of the Southampton Independent Supporters Association said: "The players owe us big time. They not only owe us three points, but the ticket money for the Watford game."

SAINTS are poised to sign Spurs keeper Kasey Keller on loan for a month as cover for Antti Niemi, who is out after a knee operation.

SERIOUSLY
football

Anfield underachiever at crossroads



■ BACK OF THE KEW: Harry Kewell hasn't scored in 29 games for Liverpool and faces life on the bench

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AND IN CINEMAS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

IT'S TIME FOR KEW TO SHINE

HARRY KEWELL last night admitted his Liverpool career could be nearing a crossroads.

The Australia international fears he could spend the rest of the season warming the bench if he can't hit top form fast.

Boss Rafael Benitez has publicly backed the 26-year-old to rediscover the vim and vigour that made him one of the Premiership's best players.

Liverpool's striker shortage means Kewell could be thrust into an attacking role once more against Crystal Palace tomorrow even though Milan Baros's hamstring problem is improving.

Tough

Kewell said: "Things haven't gone as well for me as I had hoped at Liverpool but I've definitely made a contribution."

"The competition for places is so tough right now that you know, and everyone knows, you could be one match away from the bench."

"That level of fear brings the best out of people and I hope it's true of me. I want to play some games and get back to the levels that I know I'm capable of."

"I'm not there yet but I'm getting there with every passing week."

Kewell has been targeted by disgruntled fans after struggling throughout his 18 months at the club to find the sort of form that made him feared for Leeds.

But he said: "Some people think that if you don't beat every man in the team

■ by DAVE LYONS

twice, whip in crosses from every angle and score a couple as well then you've not played well. I always set out to do that but you have to take the opponent into account and sometimes the tactics, too."

"We all had a new start at the beginning of the season when the new manager came in from Valencia. Suddenly the slate was wiped clean and we've all had to prove ourselves again."

Kewell, who has not scored for 29 games in a Liverpool shirt, admits his quest for consistency has been hindered by a series of niggling injuries. An ankle problem last season affected his rhythm while this season he has suffered with a knee injury.

Benitez has devised a special fitness programme for Kewell but has warned it could take a month to feel the benefit.

Niggles

Kewell refuses to use the aches and pains as an excuse but told LFC magazine: "I'm not a player who has been what you could call regularly injured."

"But I can't remember the last time I went into a game not feeling something, somewhere on my body."

"It's not just me though. I would be surprised if anyone anywhere ever goes out 100 per cent fit because there are always little knocks and niggles."

"Pre-season training, or the first game of a new season — that's maybe the only time that you're at your peak."



IT'S A DANNY OLD GAME

Read Chief Football Writer Danny Fullbrook every Friday

GERARD HOULIER has dropped out of the running to be the next manager of Wales, leaving John Toshack, Philippe Troussier and Dean Saunders in the running.

The FAW sub-committee met at Heathrow yesterday and will make an announcement today.

JAY-JAY OKOCHA will be allowed to link up with Nigeria next week to play against South Africa... so he can meet Nelson Mandela.

HULL have signed 27-year-old Stockport striker Luke Beckett in a £75,000 deal after he refused to sign a new contract at Edgeley Park.

ARSENAL vice-chairman David Dein wants a long-term study into the possible effects of synthetic pitches on player injuries before Premier League clubs are allowed to introduce artificial turf.

NORWICH striker Darren Huckerby has signed a one-year contract extension that will keep him at the club until June 2007.

WOLVES record goalscorer Steve Bull has thrown his hat into the ring for the vacant manager's post at Kidderminster Harriers.

STRIKER Scott Dowie, 26, has completed his £750,000 move to Millwall. He signed after falling behind Robert Earnshaw in the pecking order at West Brom.

STEVE McMAHON and Danny Wilson are both interested in managing Notts County.

LEEDS United defender Stephen Craigney faces an extended spell out with a groin injury which may need surgery.

TONY ADAMS will be welcomed back by Brunel University if the former England captain chooses to resume his sport science degree after resigning from his job as manager of Wycombe.

FERNANDO Rickens has rejected talks over a new contract at Ibrox to keep his options open in the January transfer window.

PORTRSMOUTH defender Eddie Howe, 26, has rejoined his first club Bournemouth after fans of the hard-up League One side clubbed together to pay his £7,500 signing-on fee.

WALSALL have transfer-listed former Manchester United trainee Kris Taylor.

COVENTRY CITY have decided against signing former Portsmouth and West Ham defender Sebastian Schemmel after a trial.

PRESTON striker Andy Smith, 24, has joined League One strugglers Stockport on a month's loan.

CLARIDGE has made a League comeback with Championship side Brighton at the age of 38, following his sacking at Conference South club Weymouth.

BRISTOL ROVERS boss Ian Atkins has been fined £800 after admitting to two counts of abusive and insulting conduct during his side's 2-2 draw with Yeovil.

Owen comes through S-pain barrier

HUMBLE pie, anybody? Or should that be pizza, considering the Premiership's fascination with food this season?

Whichever you hand up if you felt Michael Owen would crash and burn at Real Madrid.

Go on, be honest with yourself. After his dreadful start I bet there were thousands who thought he had made the biggest mistake of his life.

Only a handful of British players have cut it abroad and Owen did not look like he would be one of them after such a poor beginning to his Bernabeu career.

Not only did he have people in Britain fully expecting him to return in the January transfer window, but they were on his back in Spain as well.

They had seen the cream of the crop signed as "Galacticos" in Madrid, with even David Beckham scoring in his first game for the club.

Critics

But Owen was questioned from the very beginning. Tomas Roncero, a highly-rated columnist in the sports paper AS, viciously wrote: "Owen is not Reyes, Owen is not Totti, Owen is not Drogba, Owen is not Adriano, Owen is not Figo, Owen is not Raul, Owen is not Zidane. Let's face it, Owen is not a Galactico."

He went on: "When Rafa Benitez sold us Owen he must have celebrated that night with a bottle of champagne."

What the Liverpool manager would give for Owen now, considering his injury list and the England man's form.

It should really be no surprise that Owen has hit back at his critics in the best way possible, with five goals in six games, two of them securing important 1-0 victories.

Owen is one of the most dedicated and single-minded professionals in the game, which is exactly why he has succeeded and why it was foolish to underestimate him.

Petulant

Beckham and Owen may be different creatures, one loving the limelight while the other prefers the shadows of a betting shop.

But they are one and the same on a football pitch, because whatever the challenge, they refuse to let themselves down.

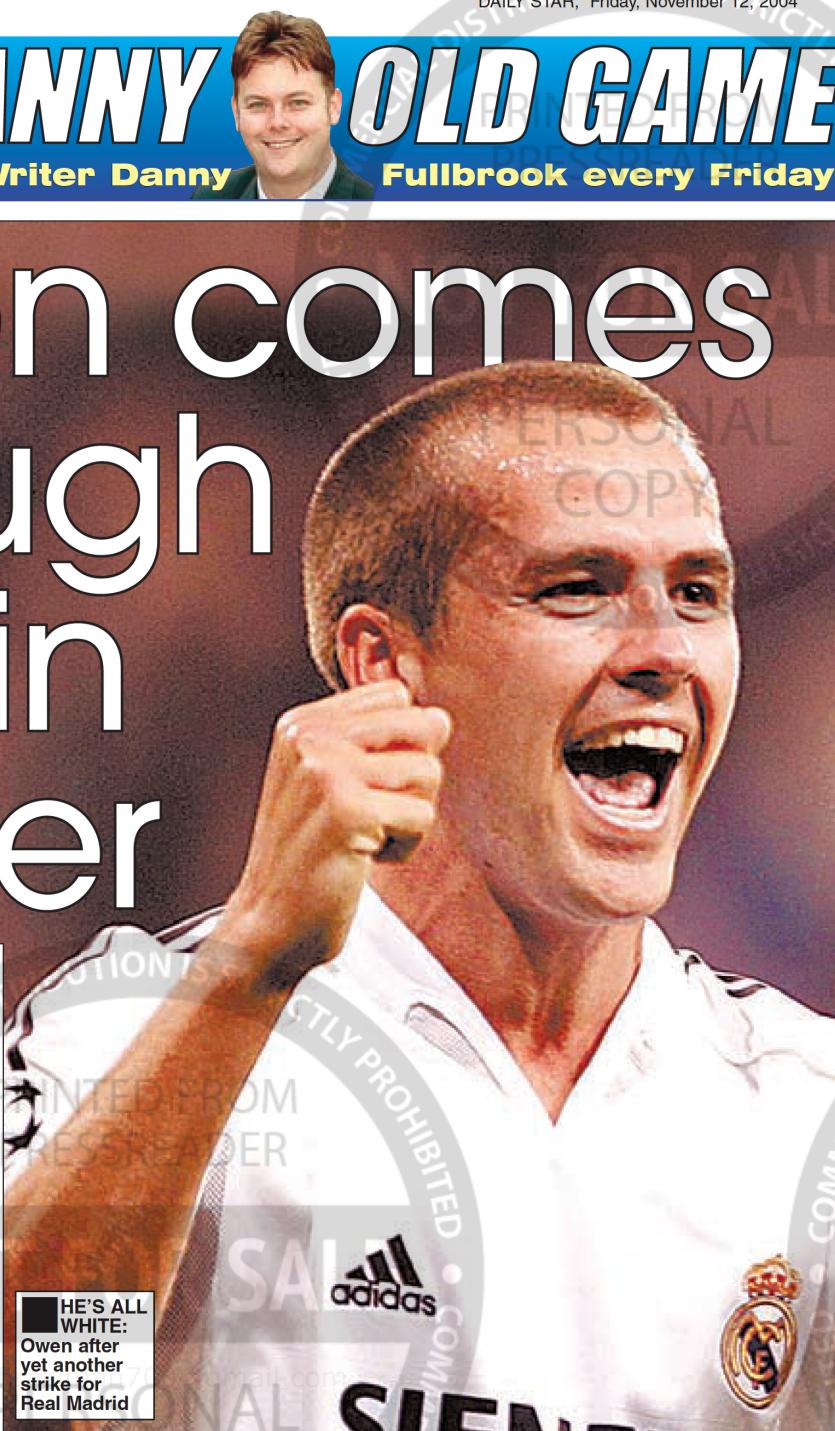
Forget Becks' petulant

IS Danny right about Michael Owen? Let him know your views. Text DSDANNY followed by a space then your views to 82100. Texts cost 25p plus normal operator rate. Or send him an e-mail to danny.fullbrook@ dailystar.co.uk

booking against Ben Thatcher and Owen's poor form in Euro 2004. If you look at their careers as a whole they have come up with the goods when it has mattered most.

And Owen is doing the same again in Madrid.

The list was announced for potential winners of the European Footballer of the Year this week and it dawned on me that it was only two years ago Owen



HE'S ALL WHITE:
Owen after
yet another
strike for
Real Madrid

was being presented with the Balon D'Or.

Admittedly, he struggled to overcome the resistance to his arrival in Spain and the questions over his ability.

It was especially difficult considering the manager he was welcomed by in Madrid - Jose Antonio Camacho - did not even want him.

But when he walked away and Mariano Garcia Remon was put in charge, Owen was finally let off his leash - to devastating effect.

Becks and Owen were always going to be the two English players of this generation who would fancy their chances abroad.

The pair had the vision and desire to taste football at the very top.

It will be interesting to

see just how well Jonathan Woodgate fares when he eventually gets back to fitness.

It will not be easy for the defender, even though there is not that much competition for places at the back in the Madrid side.

What Owen is currently achieving makes a mockery of his £3m transfer fee.

Obvious

He may have been entering the last season of his contract but I bet by the end of this season it will look like the best piece of business in Europe.

Why one of the big guns from the Premiership did not step in and snap him up when it became obvious he was going for so little, only they know.

He would have fitted in with Chelsea's direct play at Stamford Bridge, and you can't tell me that Alan

Smith is a better option than Owen for Manchester United.

But then again, he would not have gone. Because not only is Owen a great footballer, he has values. And just as he would never have walked out on Liverpool for nothing, he would also have never left them for one of their biggest rivals.

Eventually he will return - and possibly in an Arsenal shirt. But the fact he did not stick the knife into the Merseysiders will always be remembered on the Kop.

Ultimately, we should be thankful Owen is hitting his stride at the Bernabeu.

Because if he can make it there, he can make it anywhere which can only be good news for England's cause in the 2006 World Cup.

Wenger dilemma

ARSENE WENGER said he would play his young guns again in the quarter-finals after they dumped Everton out of the League Cup on Tuesday.

I wonder if he feels differently now they will be facing Manchester United?

Such a quick return to Old Trafford is not ideal for him. But it will always be remembered on the Kop.

Ultimately, we should be thankful Owen is hitting his stride at the Bernabeu.

Because if he can make it there, he can make it anywhere which can only be good news for England's cause in the 2006 World Cup.

Fans set to make it hot for Glazer

MALCOLM GLAZER has been challenged to "prove his backbone" by facing angry Manchester United shareholders at today's AGM.

United chief executive David Gill and the PLC Board are set to face a barrage of probing questions from shareholders desperate to block American tycoon Glazer's bid to buy the club.

Gill announced earlier this month that the PLC had opted not to support Glazer's proposed buy-out. But United fans are still vowing to make life tough for Glazer and Irish duo John Magnier and JP McManus, who own almost 60 per cent of the club between them.

Face

Shareholders United spokesman Oliver Houston has warned that the AGM at Old Trafford is likely to be the most heated since BSkyB tried to buy the club six years ago.

He said: "Considering that Glazer owns almost 30 per cent of United and Magnier and McManus another

■ by GEORGE SCOTT

30 per cent, it would be nice if they turned up to show their face. But I doubt they have the backbone and courage to face shareholders.

"There will obviously be lots of questions relating to the Wayne Rooney deal and all the money that the club are paying to agents.

"But we have bigger fish to fry than that because agents fees are a drop in the ocean compared to what Glazer will take out of the club if he gains control."

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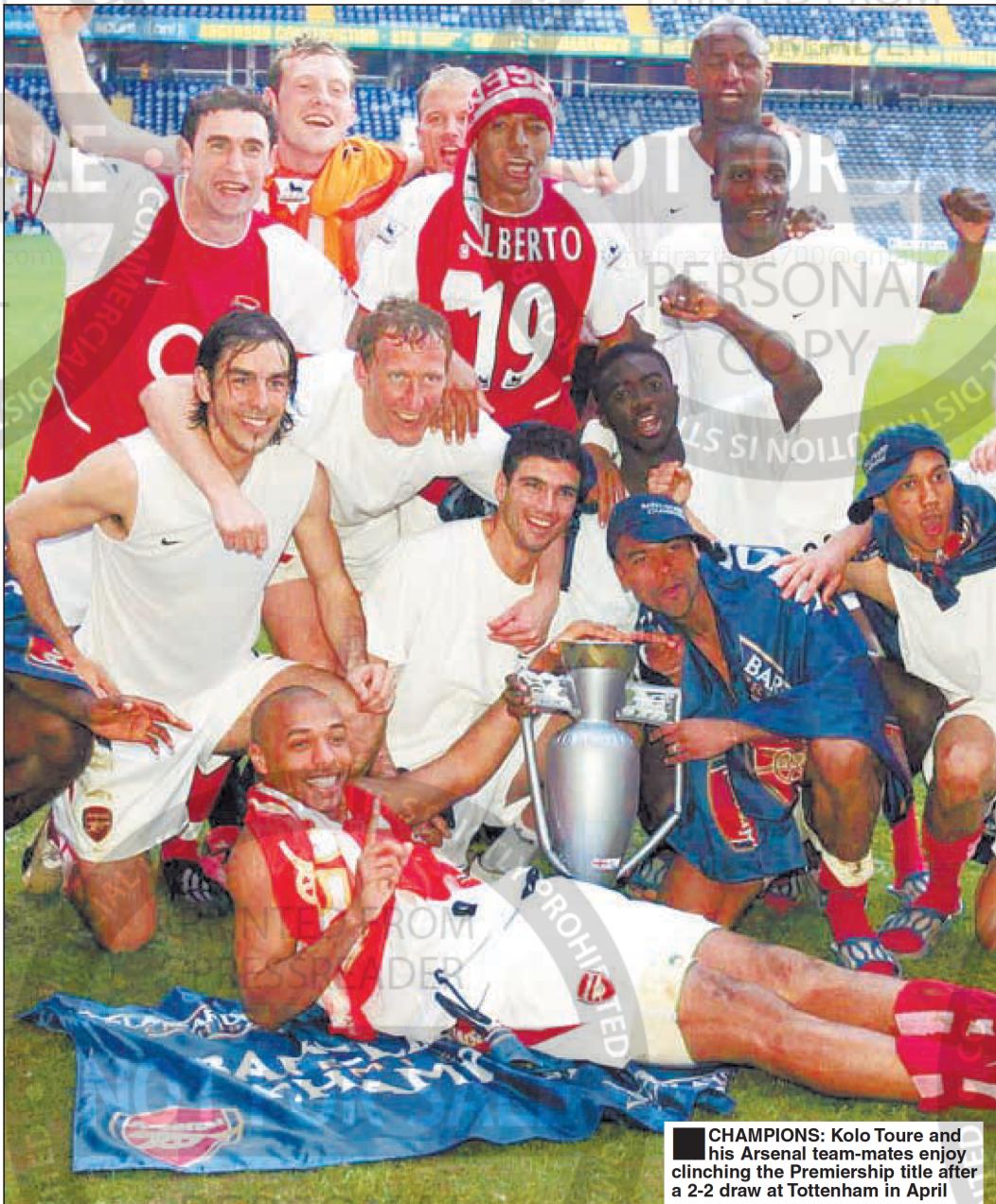
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SERIOUSLY
football

Arsenal ace set to punish arch



CHAMPIONS: Kolo Toure and his Arsenal team-mates enjoy clinching the Premiership title after a 2-2 draw at Tottenham in April

Jol: We're Gunner catch you



TARGET: Martin Jol training yesterday

MARTIN JOL last night claimed he can help Spurs catch Arsenal within a year.

The flying Dutchman faces his first Premiership game as Tottenham boss against the Champions tomorrow admitting his task is to close the chasm that separates the two North London clubs.

But he insisted defiantly: "It might be easier than you think to get closer to them."

"Lots of clubs just want to be successful, but we have got all the ingredients here to actually do it. We can achieve things."

Jol's brave boast will put him under major pressure just four days after he was promoted following Jacques Santini's shock walkout. But he is determined to

■ by SCOTT COLEMAN

think positive and rates a meeting with Arsene Wenger's aces as the best place to start.

He added: "It would be strange if you didn't have the ambition with a club like this to get closer to Arsenal."

Amazing

"The Spurs board are amazing. They have spent money and if they keep doing that I think we will be able to build a great side."

"This is not a revolution of one day, but it is a revolution of maybe a year. I am 80 or 90 per cent sure I can manage to do it, although I know it will be a hell of a job."

Jol admits the gulf between

them was underlined by the midweek League Cup games.

"Arsenal played with their reserves against Everton and they won comfortably."

"I had to use all the players in my squad against Burnley and that shows the difference between the two teams."

Jol believes he can make a start on his long-term road if he can mastermind a win over the Gunners tomorrow.

He believes his side should not be frightened of Arsene Wenger's men and has promised to go on the offensive to exploit Arsenal's recent lack of confidence.

"I want us to play organised football in an attacking way. And in general if you do not entertain the crowd then you do not have a future."

rivals after last season's Spur-fect ending



Peace off, say Guns

WE'VE GOTTA WIN THIS ONE FOR THE FANS

Says KOLO TOURE

KOLO TOURE has the best memento possible of clinching the Premiership title at White Hart Lane.

The Ivory Coast defender has a picture of himself and his wife, Mado, on the Arsenal team bus as it drove away from the ground.

An enlarged framed copy of the photograph is all ready to take pride of place in their new house.

But nobody would have predicted that just a few months later, the Premiership's record-breakers would be returning to the scene of their triumph seemingly in crisis.

The League Cup apart, Arsenal have seen Chelsea gain seven points on them in three weeks to take top spot.

Behind the scenes there is a defeat of confidence as last month's 2-0 defeat by Manchester United at Old Trafford, which brought their unbeaten 49-match Premiership run to an end, has taken its toll.

Manager Arsene Wenger is worried about his top stars becoming complacent, so the North London derby tomorrow is exactly what is needed to restore the fire in Arsenal's bellies. Last year's dramatic

Wenger lines up Down

from Back Page
putting the lad who has burst to prominence under Steve McLaren under the closest scrutiny as they search for back-up for Jose Antonio Reyes.

Wenger has many talented midfielders in his impressive, young squad. But he doesn't have a wide left player anywhere near as good as Reyes.

Downing could also be coveted by Manchester United, where Ryan Giggs, 31 on November 29, still doesn't have a serious

challenger. Giggs is also upset with the club for offering him only a one-year extension to his contract, which expires a year next summer.

Boro won't want to sell, but they would be put under pressure by a big bid for the player who many believe should be named in Sven Goran Eriksson's full England squad.

■ by DANNY FULLBROOK

draw and celebrations afterwards of winning the title is something Toure will never forget.

At the launch of the Diambars Charitable Trust to raise money for a Football Academy in Senegal, the Ivory Coast defender asked: "Is it the right time for Spurs game? It will be a really tough game but we will try to get some points from them.

"The North London rivalry is fantastic, it's really exciting to go on to the pitch. I hope to be on the pitch and I will do my best.

Hardest

"Last season's game at White Hart Lane was one of the greatest days of my life, just fantastic.

"It was the first time I'd won the championship and naturally, it will stay in my heart and in my mind for the rest of my life."

Reminded of the great pictures of him on the pitch, Toure added: "I know, I was so happy. It was such a big thing for me.

"Being at the back, nobody expected me there but we won the championship.

"I hope I can keep going. The hard part is ahead of me because everybody is waiting for me now. I think that is something I have to try to cope with.

"It will be really hard for me now because, when the strikers come, they will not see only an Ivory Coast defender, they'll see some body who is a good player.

"The hardest thing is coming for me now.

"I have the medal at my house, it has pride of place, definitely. I can tell you the place it is if you want! I have photos of the celebrations, but they are not up yet.

"But I'm moving house at the moment and I'll put them up in the new place.

"All the games we play are really important but



TEAM SPIRIT: Henry, Vieira and Toure enjoy a Champions League goal

Tottenham is something different. For the fans we have to try to do something. For us, we have to be professional, we have to beat Tottenham, we have to try to win the championship, we have to try to beat Chelsea.

"Not one of the Arsenal players will allow their guard to drop and admit their confidence has been shaken."

Toure is the same. He added: "The season is really hard, we've had a few

bad results but that's football. "We come to win every game, definitely. Now we've lost a game but it's part of life.

"Sometimes you are really happy when you wake up, sometimes you are not so happy. Everything will be good.

"Confidence is as high today as it was at the start of the season.

"We have some great players like Patrick Vieira, Thierry Henry and Dennis Bergkamp.

We are confident, we are a team, we have a great manager and I think we need just to be really confident and not overreact."

"A win over Spurs will definitely restore any dem to their confidence."

And it might just give Toure a new picture to add to his collection.

●FOR more information about the Diambars Academy and The 1000 Club, visit the charity's website www.diambars.com

From Back Page
happened." The latest twists mean that not even a match between two virtual youth teams in a competition neither club is bothered about winning can be guaranteed to stay free of spite.

The crowded calendar will make it tough for the FA to find time to deal with all the hangover from the last Battle of Old Trafford before part three kicks off.

If the Gunners don't want to co-operate with a PR exercise it will be even harder.

Even if FA chairman Geoff Thompson does manage to set up a meeting with United chief executive David Gill and Arsenal vice-chairman David Dein, it will be the two managers who will have the biggest influence on behaviour.

Wounds

Wenger has yet to decide whether to defend his 'cheat' accusations against United's Ruud van Nistelrooy at a personal hearing.

John Barnwell, chief executive of the League Managers' Association, said: "This tie is a great opportunity to heal the wounds. If you don't face up to these issues then they can be festered."

Barnwell recently wrote to all members, reminding them of their responsibilities to show mutual respect.

He revealed: "It was not specifically aimed at Arsene or Alex (Ferguson), although obviously their recent disagreement has been well-publicised.

"In our business, you are always going to get those sort of disagreements — although we would prefer them to be kept in private if at all possible."

Wenger and Ferguson have refused to back down in their war of words since United's 2-0 victory last month.

Ferguson was covered in pizza and soup after a tunnel melee. A war of words then continued between Wenger and Ferguson as Van Nistelrooy was banned by video evidence for three games for a challenge on Ashley Cole.

Leeds in turmoil

CRISIS club Leeds could be forced to sell Elland Road within the next 24 hours — after a take-over by Sebastian Sainsbury looked set to collapse last night.

Earlier this week the US-backed consortium led by Sainsbury gave proof of funding to Leeds chairman Gerald Krasner.

Both parties appeared confident the £25m deal would be done by today.

The Leeds board insisted on the deadline so the latest instalment on the £15m loan from Aston Villa shareholder Jack Petchey could be paid.

Leeds owe Petchey another £2.5m payment and face another £2m in penalties if it is not made.

Selling Elland Road now looks almost inevitable.

